The Progressive Review

Nbr 327
August 1994

Waiting. . .

There's a torpor to Washington these days that comes from more than the heat. The early optimism of the capital and its press over the prospect of a Clinton presidency has quietly shriveled. There now seems little enthusiasm or expectation. One newspaper editor tells me, "No one wants to think about Clinton."

It's a little as if we had bought some resort land without doing a perc test; now we've got the property but we can't get any water. The land still looks pretty; it's just dry.

Of course, the Clintons go on as though nothing has happened. As though Somalia, and Bosnia and unemployment had all been taken care of. As though Congress didn't have to rebuild the healthcare bill from the bottom up. As though Whitewater and Judge Hale and Paula Jones were just annoying ghosts that came with the house.

The Clintons go on just the way they always do. By talking. About a week before D-Day, the president awarded the country's first post-Vietnam Congressional Medals of Honor. He then attempted to shake the hand of the father of one of the honorees, a sergeant who had been killed in Somalia. The father refused and told Clinton he was not fit to be president. Clinton did not move on. Instead he stood his ground and argued, trying to convince the father to think otherwise, literally holding a disputation with grief.

This extraordinary story appeared in the *London Times* but was ignored by the Washington media, which, like the Clintons, would rather continue to squeeze the administration into a fantasy of what it wished it had been. It doesn't work; the words and reality just drift further apart.

In fact, they say the Republicans are going to do well this fall -- maybe even take the Senate. There is talk about whether Democratic candidates should distance themselves from the president, which is not a good sign whatever the correct answer. What seemed just two years ago an emerging triumph of Democratic centrist pragmatism now threatens not only to the president but the entire party.

The Washington establishment, including the media elite, initially found in Clinton the ideal president -- maybe better than Kennedy, the last president it truly loved. Yet having discovered itself badly mistaken, the establishment does not apologize nor change its ways. Instead, it begins the task of rewriting history so it will not be the policies of the Democratic Leadership Council and other Vichy Democrats that are at fault, but rather factors safely removed from any real agenda: personal indiscretions, errors of style, the character of the participants and so forth. In the end it will be the process that will be deemed "flawed," -- a matter of managerial misstep, rather than egregious, schizophrenic or insipid policies. The players will thus leave the field with strike-outs but no shame, ready to return for another inning or another game. That's how Washington works. That's why the Henry Kissingers of America are ever with us. And that's why Leon Panetta is chief of staff. In this city, when things go wrong you change the names, not the policies.

Meanwhile, there are two dozen FBI agents down in Little Rock scouring the president's affairs. Meanwhile, no one can describe, with any permanence, a Clinton foreign policy for anywhere; Maginot Lines of domestic programs become ten-year targets, and targets disappear at the first nasty press inquiry; the president calls the Bill of Rights "radical" and asks public housing tenants to forgo it; parts of our cities are under paramilitary occupation. At such times, it takes a 1950s sort of myopia for the federal city and its media to find as little amiss as it does.

▩

Step away from this federal city and the disjunction quickly becomes apparent. With a few exceptions, such as HUD's Henry Cisneros, federal Washington regards the local city as a motorcade route, a rhetorical target or a photo opportunity. The words from the White House communications office and the word on the street have little in common.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Progressive Review
Bucking the system since 1966

The Progressive Review is published approximately 9 times a year. Formerly the DC Gazette. One year subscription: $16. Two year subscription: $29. Single copies: $2.00. The Review uses Pacific News Service and monitors both Compuserve and Peacenet.

Editor: Sam Smith
The Progressive Review
1739 Connecticut Ave NW
Washington DC 20009
202-232-5544
Fax Nbr: 202-234-6222

Compuserve ID: 72067,1525
Peacenet handle: ssmith
Gateway address from Internet:
ssmith@igc.org
ISSN 0889-2202

Become a supporting subscriber: Many small circulation publications keep going with the help of supporting subscribers who contribute a sum in addition to their regular subscription to aid the publication in its work. We will be grateful if you indicate your support of our efforts by subscribing or renewing with a contribution above the normal fee or by sending us a contribution today. Mail to the Progressive Review, 1739 Connecticut Ave NW DC 20009

Internet Hotline: If you are a paid subscriber and can be reached via Internet without a fee, send us your e-mail address and we will add you to our hotline mailing list.

Help spread the word: To introduce the Review to friends through a free trial subscription, just write their names and addresses on a postcard and send it to the Review.

Copyright 1994, The Progressive Review. Articles not otherwise copyrighted may be reprinted by other periodicals provided they give proper credit and pay their normal reprint fees, if any.

In the local city there are now more gangs than there are neighborhoods. The second public health commissioner in a row has just given up, for despite considerable third world experience, he found DC too tough. And nine out of ten young voters polled by the *Washington Post* say they support Marion Barry for mayor. That's not a tribute to Barry; it's a measure of the vacuum elsewhere, of a growing black generation gap reminiscent of the age divide of the white 60s.

■

My morning walk takes me past Starbucks, where customers at sidewalk tables enjoy the final product of the postmodern food chain. As I approach, I pass a woman in front of the pharmacy just down the street. All her possessions are wrapped in plastic, and she speaks determinedly of things that shouldn't have been or shouldn't be. I have tried saying good morning to her a few times, but she doesn't see or hear me, so this time I am silent.

Beyond Starbucks is Sidwell Friends School. Long ago, members of the Society of Friends got into trouble for refusing to doff their hats to the king. Now, Sidwell's flag is at half-mast for 30 days; it is in memory of Richard Nixon.

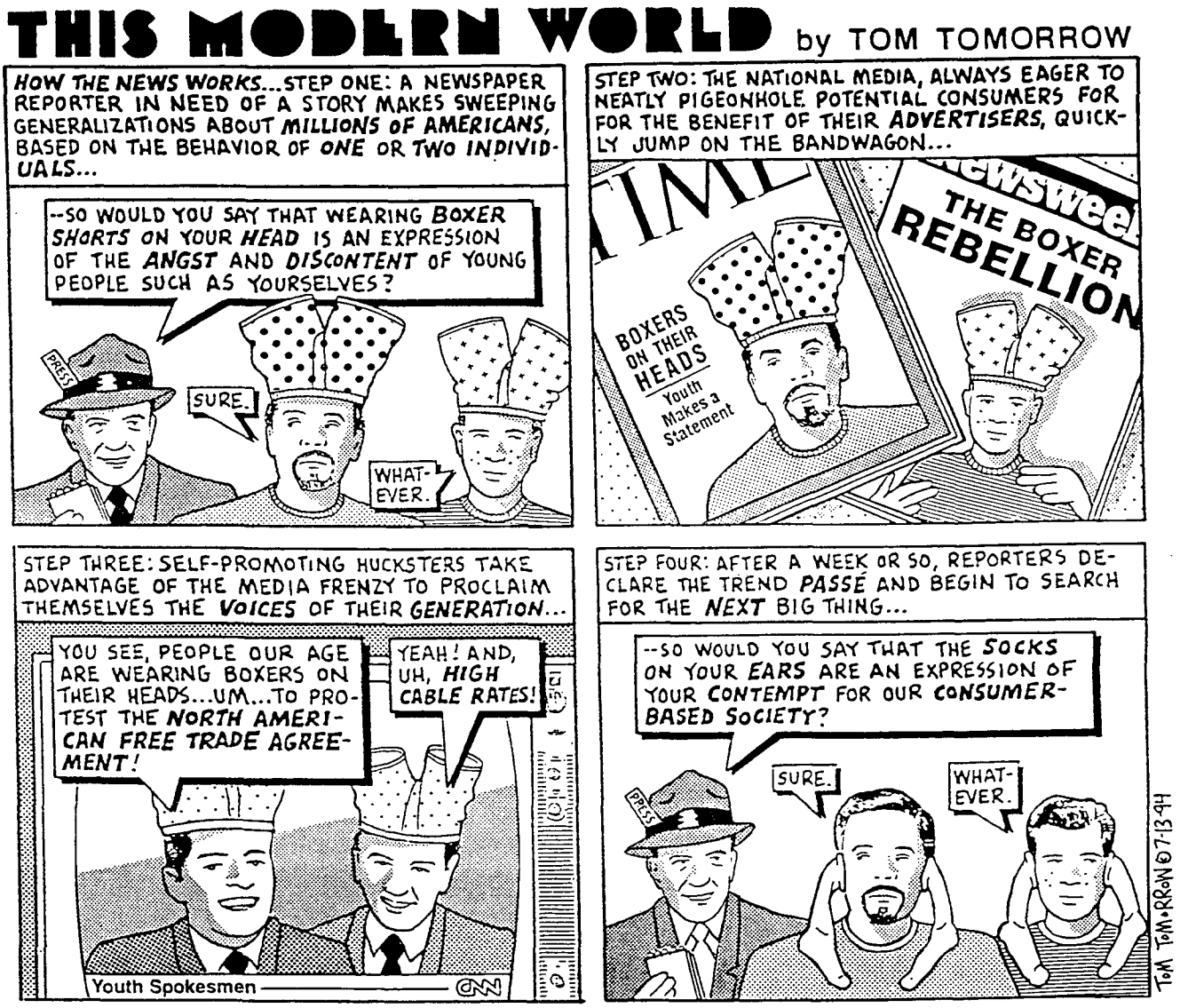
Across the street from Sidwell is the Federal National Mortgage Association. Its low-rise colonial style offices and discreet tower are fronted by an expansive lawn and it seems very much the insurance company headquarters it once was. Today there is an 18-wheeler flatbed trailer truck parked alongside. It has brought scores of bushes from North Carolina to make the lawn even grander. Security guards with pressed tan uniforms and state trooper hats stand in the driveway as latino workers dig holes for the bushes.

Everything in Washington seems to need security these days. The Vice President's house is taking on the character of a nuclear weapons plant. It has double fencing, guard houses scattered around the grounds and a massive checkpoint. Soon it may be a federal offense to tell jokes about the vice president in Washington, just like you can't tell jokes about bombs at an airport.

A homeless man passes me, apparently on his way from a shelter to his favorite corner, walking past the newly shrubbed lawn of an agency that was established to help people get mortgages. As I reach the corner, another man, who looks a bit like Ray Charles except that he sees everything that passes, calls out a greeting. I reply, "I'm hangin' in there." He shouts back, "Don't worry. You'll make your move."

I'm not surprised. A regular near my office to whom I have never given more than a quarter and a passing greeting recently approached me in the magazine shop at the corner. "Come here," he said, "I've got something for you." He reached in his pocket and handed me the thirty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


THIS MODERN WORLD by TOM TOMORROW
HOW THE NEWS WORKS...STEP ONE: A NEWSPAPER REPORTER IN NEED OF A STORY MAKES SWEEPING GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT MILLIONS OF AMERICANS, BASED ON THE BEHAVIOR OF ONE OR TWO INDIVIDUALS...
--SO WOULD YOU SAY THAT WEARING BOXER SHORTS ON YOUR HEAD IS AN EXPRESSION OF THE ANGST AND DISCONTENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE SUCH AS YOURSELVES?
PRESS
SURE.
WHATEVER.
STEP TWO: THE NATIONAL MEDIA, ALWAYS EAGER TO NEATLY PIGEONHOLE POTENTIAL CONSUMERS FOR FOR THE BENEFIT OF THEIR ADVERTISERS, QUICKLY JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON...
THE BOXER REBELLION
BOXERS ON THEIR HEADS
Youth Makes a Statement
STEP THREE: SELF-PROMOTING HUCKSTERS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE MEDIA FRENZY TO PROCLAIM THEMSELVES THE VOICES OF THEIR GENERATION...
YOU SEE, PEOPLE OUR AGE ARE WEARING BOXERS ON THEIR HEADS...UM...TO PROTEST THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT!
YEAH! AND, UH, HIGH CABLE RATES!
Youth Spokesmen
STEP FOUR: AFTER A WEEK OR SO, REPORTERS DECLARE THE TREND PASSÉ AND BEGIN TO SEARCH FOR THE NEXT BIG THING...
--SO WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE SOCKS ON YOUR EARS ARE AN EXPRESSION OF YOUR CONTEMPT FOR OUR CONSUMER-BASED SOCIETY?
PRESS
SURE.
WHATEVER.
TOM TOMORROW 07-13-94

cents that came out, adding, "You may need a cup of coffee." For several days thereafter, he refused any change from me, indicating that I had done my share.

People said to be mired in social pathology aren't meant to act like that. But then social pathology doesn't always live up to its reputation.

There are, for example, the Wednesday night meetings of a group trying to organize a grassroots conference on local issues. It gathers at a 1300-bed shelter, the largest in the country. As I walk up to the third floor, one of the residents is sweeping the steps and another is on the loudspeaker saying that too many people have congregated in the lobby and would they take their business elsewhere. There is grimness to this place, but also a sense of order being recreated and -- even more important -- a sense of shelter, not just from the heat and the cold and the rain, but from a city and a nation that doesn't seem to care.

Our group held a forum at which environmentalists, successful high school students, senior citizens and gang members came together to say what bothered them about the city and what could be done. A few of the gang members -- some of whom the school system had said were too dangerous to let back in class -- snickered when the president of a senior tenants association started to speak, but it didn't last long. As he told how he had beaten city hall at its own game, they began listening and some softly cheered him.

A senior from McKinley high school told how in one of his classes they put out a bucket to catch the water when it rains. He was headed for college, but he spoke of those who weren't. "Most drug dealers," he said, could be "mathematical geniuses and covert operation specialists. There are doctors and lawyers out there, but they're locked up."

When it was their turn, the members of the crews (as gangs are called here) lined up proudly behind an ex-inmate -- now with two college degrees -- running a program for them. They listened respectfully as he spoke

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of his and their concerns. There was a lot of respect in the room.

A *Washington Post* reporter wandered into the meeting because nothing was happening on the night police beat. Afterwards she said to me, "This is how I imagine the civil rights movement might have started." I told her she might be right. After all, movements are a place -- as C. S. Lewis said of reading -- where people learn that they are not alone.

When you come right down to it, the system is not particularly anxious to have gang members, environmentalists and leaders of Korean Youth United sitting down and talking about what they might have in common. It certainly doesn't want it noticed that there are now so many ex-offenders in DC that they form a major voting bloc. And it is not thrilled that people might weary of an endless and fraudulent "empowerment," and really want to take power instead.

From City Hall to the White House, from welfare to the war on drugs, those in power prefer a paradigm of pathology -- controllable by force and punishment rather than driven by a vision of potential and hope that would, in its wake, reveal as unmistakably wrong too much that has protected too few for too long.

And so the Democratic President of the United States speaks of forced labor, of penalties for the pregnancies of unemployed women, of new reasons for capital punishment, of boot camps and of rights that must be surrendered for a marginal gain in safety. To find hope you have to listen to a man who has brought members of five gangs together or another who is teaching the homeless those trades the school system never did. In Washington, it seems that the wrong people have given up.

■

Of course, you're not meant to notice. By much of the city's definition, the right people are in charge now. For them, the issue is not what is happening to America but who gets to decide. These, after all, are people who helped make the sixties, who worked for the Kennedys and for Carter, who went to the best schools and got the best grades, who have written most seriously about the most important matters, who say the best things at the best dinner parties. If they aren't up to the job then. . .

And that precisely is the problem: *Then.* Then the American establishment has finally burned itself out. Liberal and conservative, incumbent politician and entrenched columnist, all capable of little but repetition, increasingly irrelevant relics of an empire that can never return but refuses to expire. Devoid of imagination, common sense, or the wisdom that comes from simple compassion and honest experience, our leaders stumble along, entangled in the web of their enervated presumptions and archaic prejudices.

To notice and say this, however, makes one lonely in Washington. A British journalist introduced me to someone by saying I was the town's last progressive. It wasn't true, of course, but there are days when it feels that way.

The orthodoxy of one's friends can be far more stifling than that of one's enemies. I tell them to just think of me as a Republican. That way I at least escape the opprobrium heaped on apostasy. It is better to have never joined the church than to have fallen away.

In the end, Washington is about being on teams. There are only two teams and the rules say that when your team is in power you either cheer up or shut up.

There is, for example, a group to which I belonged that strongly and publicly challenged the Bush administration. After the election, it pretty much disappeared. Then the other day I got a notice saying that the group was being revived, but with a telling caveat:

> Our idea is that the meetings will be informal and off the record with no action taken in the name of the group.

What do you do when it is your friends who are wrong? This group now meets quietly with no name, no voice and no action. Others trim their agendas to stay one amendment ahead of the White House or the Congress. Some take refuge in judging the president by their favorite issue, as though supporting abortion made irrelevant how one treats those in public housing. Others keep saying, "But he's better than Bush." Still others stop talking about it altogether.

■

It has become a time of waiting, as we absorb the full implications of having our political choices narrowed to competing demogogueries. We can not prevent the wait, but it may help to recall the Latin proverb: "Fortune favors the well prepared." The French resistance understood this. While listening every night for a coded signal that would announce the commencement of liberation, it spent its days helping to prepare for its successful completion.

In the American progressive movement some fully realize that the most important business to be about is not that of adaptation but of preparation, not to reach an accommodation with the present, but to a lay a path for the future. They are out there in America's communities -- an underground of hope and imagination.

But in Washington this progressive variety appears to have withered. Far more persist in believing that somehow they can reform and redirect the most conservative and cynical Democratic administration in modern times -- an administration that has corrupted the spirit of what grew out of the 60s, taking the ideals and symbols and transforming them into mere tools of puerile power.

That's why new visions are so important. But the new visions remain largely hidden. We live in a country that does not incarcerate people for their ideas; rather it just locks up their ideas -- aided by a media that engages in what Spengler called the "terrible conspiracy of silence."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And so while some struggle and build in the silence, many others who might once have been associated with meaningful and humane progress have either removed themselves from the fray or are content to be consumers, rather than advocates, of change. Like the not so alternative newspapers and magazines they read, they prefer attitude to action and style to substance. They toil not, neither do they spin; they only pose. The future is just a problem of good graphic design and finding the right clothes.

We find ourselves -- in Matthew Arnold's words -- "wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born." Still, it is also true that the latter lacks only power to be born at last. We can not predict when that will happen, but if we choose, we can certainly help get ready. -- *Sam Smith*

The Review On Line

If you have an Internet address, send it to us on a postcard or to ssmith@igc.org and we will add you to our Peacenet hotline mailing list. You can also find us at alt.activism and alt.politics.clinton. Sorry, offer not good for networks that carry e-mail charges.

WEATHER REPORT

Sleazy tabloid stuff

• Robert Fiske's first report on a few of the events generically known as Whitewater reveals him as something less than a hard-bitten investigator. While White House aides had an extraordinary 20 meetings with Treasury officials concerning Whitewater related inquiries, Fiske limited his conclusions to the lack of criminal behavior. The White House immediately declared the non-indictment a vindication. Yet as the *New York Times* pointed out:

> Mr. Fiske asserts that these officials did not criminally obstruct justice as defined in Section 1505 of the US Code. But an action does not have to rise to the level of criminality to be labeled stupid, irresponsible and improper behavior by government officials. That is the only way to describe the three meetings at the heart of Mr. Fiske's inquiry.

In the matter of Vince Foster's death, Fiske provided considerable forensic and other evidence to support the thesis that Foster killed himself. He also, however, presented a reconstruction of Foster's motivations and mindset based heavily on the unsubstantiated testimony of friends and political co-workers whose major attributes include an obsession for spinning facts. The result is perhaps the first special prosecutor's report that could be run unedited in *People* magazine but one that is hardly a model of dispassionate inquiry. Fiske seemed to be trying too hard to explain something no one yet understands. It was not a good precedent for his further investigations.

• There are some who have not been as comfortable with Fiske as has most of the mainstream media. They note that Fiske was professionally involved with former White House counsel Bernard Nussbaum, with the latter referring clients to the former. The pair were on the same side in at least two legal cases and Nussbaum recommended Fiske for a job with Iran-Contra prosecutor Lawrence Walsh.

Further, Fiske worked with Robert Bennett, now Clinton's lawyer, in the BCCI case of Robert Altman and Clark Clifford, as did current Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick. Given the tie-in between BCCI and various financial dealings in Arkansas now under scrutiny, the history is not insignificant.

Things have always moved a little too smoothly in the BCCI investigation and prosecution, leaving scores of unanswered questions and, so far as can be determined, hardly anyone to blame. Some journalistic investigators say a full inquiry into BCCI would blaze a bi-partisan path through some of the most powerful offices in Washington. Meanwhile, Swaleh Naqvi, BCCI's number two man, has been given a mild sentence -- over the objections of Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau. Naqvi's plea bargain with Justice in the major bank fraud appears to be a case of what the *Wall Street Journal* called "sweetheart justice." Said the *Journal:*

> When drugs and money laundering arrive, political corruption cannot be far behind. If we had an explanation of how BCCI got away with its illegal purchase of First American, we could afford to dismiss such ambiguous connections as lawyer-client relationships. But we have no such answer, and are left to speculate why, in the Naqvi plea-bargain, the Justice Department does not seem to be pressing for one.

If the Whitewater probe, as it very well may, crosses paths with the far larger BCCI scandal, it will be telling to see how Fiske handles his own ethical problem.

Just politics

Roll Call points out that while Ms. Clinton has been quick to imply that Congress has provided itself with some very nice health coverage, she has failed to note that the First Persons are similarly blessed. In fact, the federal

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

health care plan is available to 2.4 million other government employees.

Eco-notes

Barry Commoner in the *Daily Citizen:* "What people forget is that the economics of buying and selling material is not the issue [in recycling.] The issue is what is the cost of disposing of trash. And it turns out that the amount you save in trash disposal costs by recycling will even allow you to pay someone to take the recycled material away."

Land of the free

• As an example of how "three strikes and you're out" works, the *Washington Post* reports that a robber who stole a total of $644 over the course of three felonies has been sentenced to life in prison without parole by the state of Washington.

• In yet another example of its indifference to the Bill of Rights, the Clinton administration has published proposed regulations that would allow civil rights investigators to check to see if colleges police harassment, including "verbal, graphic or written" communications. The American Council on Education has urged the Clintonistas to reconsider. Said a representative: "If followed, [the regulations] would cause most schools to violate the First Amendment."

The Cold War (cont'd)

• Those who keep track of such things tell us a careful look at Pentagon spending would reveal billions in "unmatched disbursements," another way of saying that the money was spent but nobody knows for quite what. Other fine Pentagon euphemisms include an "unliquidated negative balance" and "disbursements in excess of obligations," which are the Pentagon equivalent of kiting a check.

• Alexander Cockburn in the *Nation* suggests that the underlying cause of violence is violence, not family breakdown, teenage mothers etc. And, says Cockburn, "the main promoter of violent cultural patterns in this society is Violence Central, the US military." To back this up, Cockburn cites an internal US Army survey uncovered by *Time,* that shows spousal abuse occurring in one of every three Army families, double the civilian rate. *Time's* Mark Thompson also found another study that revealed a correlation between domestic violence and combat jobs. Troops trained for combat are more likely to batter children.

SHADOWS OF HOPE

A Freethinker's Guide to Politics in the Time of Clinton.

It's at your bookstore now

Or order by calling

1-800-842-6796

"In the style and tradition of I. F. Stone" – EUGENE J. MCCARTHY

"Lively, astute and powerful critique of the Clinton approach to our national crises. It raises profound questions about our two-party system as a corruption of the democratic ideal." - HOWARD ZINN, historian and author

"Unlike most studies of sitting presidents, Sam Smith's common sense portrayal of the multiple identities and goals of the postmodern Clinton administration could easily become the abiding theme of later interpretations. . . A clarion warning about the increasingly meaningless and undemocratic nature of sound-byte American politics. — JOAN HOFF, Historian and author, *Nixon Reconsidered*

$22.50

INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Freedom Summer. . .

From some comments by Angela Davis at Brown University:

[The Freedom Summer of 1964] was the most powerful display of protracted coordinated mass activism this country has ever seen. . .

It is very important to reflect on what gets admitted in our historical memory and what gets excluded. While Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown are familiar names, figures such as Ruby Doris Robinson -- the executive director of SNCC -- are forgotten. I would suggest that it has something to do with her gender. . .

The summer of 1964 served as a catalyst for all kinds of social movements. The women's liberation movement had its roots in that effort to register black people to vote. . . In the process of doing that work [those involved] became conscious of the extent to which women were treated as inferior beings.

Ms. Davis noted that the women's liberation movement did not start out as a white women's movement, but came about because women of color began to reconsider their positions in SNCC. She said that the black power movement, the Black Panthers, the Asian-American movement, the Chicano movement, the gay movement and the American Indian movement all were born from the activism and experiences of those who worked with SNCC during Freedom Summer:

There was a very interesting cross-fertilization of these movements. We tend to think now from the vantage point of identity politics -- movements as isolation. We don't think about the relationship between the Black Panther Party and the emergence of the gay rights movement.

Good news

One of the bright spots of the Clinton administration has been Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary's drive to declassify data such as that concerning past nuclear weapons tests and human radiation experiments. Says Steven Aftergood of *Secrecy & Government Bulletin:* "This is a momentous shift in attitude, especially when compared with the adversarial stance toward the public that is habitually adopted by the intelligence community." In fact, O'Leary finds herself embattled with other agencies, some of which fear that DOE's openness might lead to expectations that they follow suit. In the last year or so, DOE has issued about as many declassification decisions as energy agencies had in their entire previous 50 year history. Meanwhile, however, the languid National Security Council has backed off declassifying 48 million pages of documents from World War II and tens of thousands of other pages going all the way back to World War I. Well, you never can tell. . .

Loose change

• James Ledbetter of the *Village Voice* was one of the few pressies who picked up on Sen. John Kerry's observation that while Jim McDougal's S&L only cost the taxpayers $60 million, S&L losses in Texas due to reach $200 *billion.* The GAO says that an estimated 57% of all S&L losses attributable to insider criminal fraud -- $2.1 billion -- occurred in Texas. Nonetheless, points out Kerry, the Resolution Trust Corporation has recovered only $42,000 from Lone Star state insiders. The RTC issued only 27 subpoenas to officials of the 50 S&Ls involved over a five year period. Compare that with the 160 that Robert Fiske has issued in just five months. While the $60 million lost by McDougal certainly isn't chump change, it does show how quickly the media loses interest in a story if there isn't a face to go with it.

• When Clinton et al prattle about the need to increase US productivity, the media accepts the notion without question. Yet, in fact, productivity has risen so much in some industries that it amounts to a dangerous work speedup. New Directions, the UAW reform movement, notes that the injury rates in auto assembly plants has leaped in the past decade, reversing a previous decline. For example between 1979 and 1985, the injury rate per 100 workers went down from 7.7 to 5. By 1991, during a period of rising productivity, it was up to 28.3.

Foreign news

Although you wouldn't know it from the coverage of Clinton's mishandling of Haiti, the Supreme Court has ruled that applicants for refugee admission do not have to prove that they would be singled out for punishment if sent back or even that there would be a clear probability of such punishment. Rather they need only show a reasonable possibility of persecution. In a letter to the *New York Times,* Robert DeVecchi and Charles Sternberg of the International Rescure Committee quoted the court as saying:

> There is simply no room. . .for concluding that because an applicant only has a ten percent chance of being shot, tortured or otherwise persecuted, that he or she has no well-founded fear of the event happening.

•The White House is finding that its tough-guy routine doesn't always go over that well in other countries. Thus, when NSC staffer Rand Beers was dispatched to Panama to straighten out the government there on the need

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The word game. . .

People learn a word by witnessing other people using it, so when they use a word, they provide a history of their reading and listening. Using the latest term for a minority often shows not sensitivity but subscribing to the right magazines or gong to the right cocktail parties. Shifts in terms have an unfortunate side effect. Many people who don't have a drop of malice or prejudice but happen to be older or distant from university, media and government spheres find themselves tainted as bigots for innocently using passé terms like *Oriental* or *crippled.* Arbiters of the changing linguistic fashions must ask themselves whether this stigmatization is really what they set out to accomplish. -- *Steven Pinker, professor of brain and cognitive sciences at MIT, in the* New York Times

to absorb Haitian refugee, President Endara reported that Beers behaved "like a pig," never laughed and "always wore an irritated expression, a self-important expression. . .and he treated me like a subaltern of the American empire. . . He looked at me like I was a piece of shit."

The mediacracy

Single-payer health care is on the ballot in California this fall, but when the initiative was certified for the election, the *LA Times* ran only a two inch story on page A17. And it didn't run any story about the fact that the California section of the AARP had endorsed single-payer. The section has three million members; it is estimated that the initiative will need four million yes votes.

Drug busts

• Things are hopping over at the Drug Policy Foundation, a leader in the drug peace movement. International philanthropist George Soros his pledged $6 million to the group over the next three years. And David Condliffe, director of drug abuse under Mayor Dinkins of NYC, has just become executive director. Other signs of the times are some of the names being added to the DPF board, including federal judge Robert Sweet, Baltimore mayor Kurt Schmoke, New Haven police chief Nicholas Pastore, and former Kansas City and San Jose police chief Joseph McNamara.

• The new president of the American Bar Association, George Bushnell, has come out in favor of legalizing drugs. He also calls "three strikes and you're out" bills "a glitzy response to the fear that grips our country" and that building more prisons is a "rathole for money." . . . *Rep. Dan Hamburg of California, who advocated an adult's right to grow pot for personal use, easily won his primary despite being tagged as a "pro-drug" politician.* . . . Raymond Kendall, secretary general of Interpol indicated his support for decriminalizing drugs. . . . Dear Abby *responded to a letter about legalization by listing a number of reasons why it would be a good idea.*

• What would happen if drugs were decriminalized? Well, we happen to have at least a partial answer and it is: not much. During the 1970s eleven states decriminalized, yet usage in these states did not increase more than in those which retained criminal sanctions.

• Switzerland is giving about 700 of its 30,000 addicts daily doses of heroin, morphine or methadone in a three year test that the government hopes will allow the users to resume life free of a constant search for drugs and the money to pay for them. Switzerland's liberal drug policy also includes a free needle-exchange program. In the past year there was a 16% drop in drug deaths and a 28% drop in AIDS deaths.

• A federal judge has upheld a Georgia law that requires candidates for state office to certify that they have tested negative for illegal drugs.

Furthermore. . .

• How come no media showed any interest in pursuing Ms. Clinton's strange remarks about having once tried to join the Marines? The year was 1975, the year she married Bill, and she was teaching at the University of Arkansas law school at the time. The traditional reasons for precipitously joining the Marines include being drunk, broke or bored as hell. None of these descriptions seem to apply to Ms. Clinton. There has been a suggestion that she was part of an effort to test the military response to female applicants but, if so, it would have been nice if she had informed the luncheon honoring military women at which she made the revelation. The distinct impression she left was that she had been serious about enlisting. She told the audience of her interview: "It was not a very encouraging conversation. I decided maybe I'll look for another way to serve my country."

• The Canadian magazine *Geist* ran a contest for a new national motto and some of the winners would work for the US&A as well:

MY NAME IS CANADA AND I'M A RECOVERING COUNTRY
FROM C TO C-
NEEDS SOME ASSEMBLY

• The absurdity of the current anti-crime rampage brings to mind George Bush's remark: "We have to make the death penalty tougher."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FEEDBACK

• *Raymond Wilkinson of Montvale NJ writes.- I* have read the recent issues of the *Review* with distaste. While I, also, have been disappointed in some of Clinton's policies, others I find commendable.

To put things in perspective, did George Bush, after finishing his baseball career at Yale, suddenly get a partner and become wealthy in the oil business without the influence of Senator Bush giving him entree to preferential deals? Did Dwight Eisenhower do nothing to deserve the gift of a retirement farm in Pennsylvania? How did Bush's sons get to make such lucrative deals in banking, oil and the like? Reagan, Johnson, Nixon and Ford all became millionaires through business skills??? If Bill and Hillary were so greedy, how come their wealth in leaving the governorship was well under a million? Were their efforts to help the education and well being of children in Arkansas just a smokescreen?

Whatever the truth of Bill's sexual life may be, Oscar Schindler was capable of doing some good in this world despite his reputation as a ladies man.

I am very disappointed in your magazine and would not resubscribe under any circumstances.

• *John Cantalupo of Washington DC writes:* Re your concern on national educational standards. You forgot to mention that they are voluntary. States and localities will continue by far to be the main players in our educational system.

ROADSIGNS

Drugs

Number of illicit drug users in 1992: 23 million

Percentage of regular drug users in 1992 who were white: 80%

Percentage of regular drug users in 1992 who were black: 13%

Percentage of those convicted of state felony drug charges in 1990 who were white: 43%

Percentage of those convicted of state felony drug charges in 1990 who were black: 56%

Percentage of young white males under some form of correctional control: 6%

Percentage of young black males under some form of correctional control: 23%

Number of Americans who need drug treatment: 5 million

Number of publicly funded treatment slots available: 500,000

Increase in corrections spending by state and local government, 1970-1990: 232%

Increase in welfare spending by state and local government, 1970-1990: 79%

Increase in healthcare spending by state and local government, 1970-1990: 71%

Getting along

Chances that you will win a state lottery with one ticket: 1 in 5.2 million

Chances you will be struck by lightning sometime in your lifetime: 1 in 600,000

Chance you will be killed by a terrorists while overseas: 1 in 650,000

Chance you will be killed by an American on a trip to Baltimore: 1 in 4000

Chance you will died in a car accident this year: 1 in 75

Justice

Number of Americans in prison 1992 per 100,000 population: 455 (the highest in the world)

Number of South Africans in prison in 1992 per 100,000 population: 311 (second highest)

Percentage of urban inmates nationally who commit new crimes after being released: 40%

Percentage of inmates graduating from the University of DC's Lorton prison program who commit new crimes after being released: 6%

Drop in juvenile crime around Phoenix recreation centers when the centers stayed open until 2 am in the summer: 55%

Media

Drop in national weekday newspaper circulation, 1988-1993: 7%.

Increase in national Sunday newspaper circulation, 1988-1993: 2%

Percent of 112 surveyed radio talk show hosts who supported Clinton in 1992: 39%

Percent who supported Bush: 23%

Percent who supported Perot: 18%

Military

Number of elementary schools that could be built for the price of one B-2 bomber: 424

Politics

Amount spent by the Republican National Committee in 1989 on polling, including leftover bills from the 1988 campaign: $400,000

Amount spent by the Democratic National Committee in 1993 on polling: $1.9 million

SOURCES

Drugs: Drug Strategies and the Washington Center for Politics & Journalism **Getting Along:** *What Are the Chances* by Bernard Siskin **Justice:** Justice Dept., *Washington Times*, Trust for Public Land **Media:** *American Journalism Review*, Times Mirror Center **Military:** Center for Defense Information **Politics:** *Time*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIELD NOTES

READING

False Hope: The Politics of Illusion in the Clinton Era: Norman Solomon, whom *Utne Reader* describes as one of the "Fiercest and most articulate media critics around," takes on the Clinton myth in this new book from Common Courage Press.

Vital Signs: The Trends That Are Shaping Our Future: Another book of data from the Worldwatch people. Trends covered include agriculture, energy, economics, transportation and the military. *WW Norton.*

National Defense Industry Layoffs 1993: A study that examines employment trends in defense related industries. *$7.50 from Economic Conversion & Disarmament, 1828 Jefferson Place NW, WDC 20036.*

Guide to Instructing Legislators: A 16-page booklet explains the Massachusetts state constitutional right of citizens to tell legislators how to vote. Fifteen other state constitutions contain the right of legislative instruction. *$3 plus envelope (bigger than 8.5"x5.5") stamped with 52 cents postage to CPPAX Education Fund, 25 West Street, Boston MA 02111. Call Steve Stefano, 617-426-3042*

GATHERINGS

.Coalition on Political Assassinations: First annual conference at the Sheraton Washington Hotel in DC, Oct. 7-10 *Info: 202-310-1868*

ACTION

City presidential primaries: Working quietly over the past two years, a group called City Vote has arranged for a diverse group of cities to conduct presidential preference balloting in conjunction with their November 7, 1995 municipal elections. Among the cities: Baltimore, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Spokane, Pasadena and Olympia. The idea is to get the urban agenda into the 1996 presidential primaries early and loudly. *City Vote, 14978 Sand Canyon Ave #A, Irvine CA 92718*

THE PROGRESSIVE REVIEW
1739 Connecticut Ave NW
Washington DC 20009-8922

Use this form to subscribe, renew or change your address

[ ] One year $16
[ ] Two years $29
[ ] Foreign one year $26
[ ] Contribution enclosed $_____
[ ] Please correct my address at right

Mail with check to address above

SUBSCRIBER NEWSLETTER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED